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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT — Thursday, August 22, 1940.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from various bureaus, U.S.Department of Agriculture. Publications available, Farmers' Bulletins 1762-F, 1424-F, 1497-F.

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Now, let's answer the mail. Today we have questions about the new one-pie pumpkin, about canning corn on the cob, about how to soften hard water, and how to make raspberry vinegar. The answers are from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

First, let's take the question about raspberry vinegar. This woman says: "How do you make raspberry vinegar, and how do you use it?"

Well, of course you make raspberry vinegar like other fruit vinegars. The method isn't hard, but it would take too long to describe it in full. The Bureau of Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering says there are two fermentations in making fruit vinegars- one is alcoholic, the other acetic. Sometimes when a bottle of fruit wine "sours" you have an accidental supply of vinegar. Farmers' Bulletin 1424-F gives directions for making raspberry and other berry vinegars, as well as vinegars from apples, grapes, oranges, peaches, persimmons, pears, berries of several kinds, and even watermelons.

Old-fashioned housekeepers often kept a jar of raspberry vinegar on hand so they could serve a cool acid drink to a visitor. You make raspberry-ade by adding a few tablespoonfuls of this raspberry vinegar to a glass of cold water, and sweetening it according to your taste.

Next question is about hard water. "What is the best way to soften hard water?" this writer asks. She says, "There's a sticky scum on my wash water after I put in the soap or soap solution. Neighbors tell me this is due to the water being hard."

Well, the Bureau of Home Economics says that the only really satisfactory way to soften hard water is to put in a zeolite system. These are used in commercial laundries and in private homes where the household water supply can be led through tanks of zeolite before being distributed through the house, and where the water is so hard that the expense of installing the system is justified.

But for temporary use you can try washing soda, borax, trisodium phosphate, or ammonia solution, to soften hard water. You can get these simple materials anywhere. Directions for their use are generally found on the package. In using washing soda, do not put it directly into your washing water. Dissolve 1 pound of washing soda in one quart of water, and strain. Then use 2 tablespoonfuls of this solution for each gallon of wash water. If you don't dissolve the washing soda completely, and strain it, small crystals of it may stick to the clothes and make holes in them.

If you care to send to the Department of Agriculture for a copy of Farmers' Bulletin 1497-F, you can also learn how to tell when you have softened the water enough. If you use too much water softener, the water will be too alkaline.
Now, back to the food, the pumpkin pie and corn on the cob.

Here's one about canning whole ears of corn. The question is: "Can you can corn right on the cob?" The answer is: you can, but it doesn't pay. The canning specialists of the Bureau of Home Economics say they have canned corn on the cob in the Bureau's laboratories, but that they could only get three or four ears into a container,- even those wide-mouthed, two-quart, glass jars. And that you have to process jars as large as that such a long time the corn doesn't have a very good flavor.

But you may can all the corn you like, off the ear, in either two styles,- whole-grain or "cream style." That is, if you own, or can get the use of a steam pressure canner. Don't attempt to can corn any other way.

You cut whole-grain corn from the cob without scraping, but you use a more shallow cut for cream style corn and then scrape the cob to get out all the pulp.

This makes a rather thick, pasty, mass, so cream style corn requires a longer processing period than whole-grain corn.

Heat the corn to boiling, and pack at once into pint glass jars or number 2 tin cans,- the kind called "C enamel." Quart jars or number 3 cans take longer to process and so the flavor of the corn is less like that of fresh corn if you use such large cans.

As for the time of processing, there's a Farmers' Bulletin on home canning of fruits, vegetables, and meats. This gives the exact length of time each style of corn and each size container must stay in the steam pressure canner. The number of this bulletin is 1762-F, and you can get it by writing to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Now for that question about a new kind of pumpkin. A mother whose family likes pumpkin pies writes: "I've heard somewhere of a 'one-pie pumpkin', which would just suit my family. If I cut a large pumpkin in half, the cut part does not keep very well. It seems as if this 'one-pie' variety would be a good one to grow next year, but I don't know where to get it."

This lady has, no doubt, heard about the Early Cheyenne pumpkin, developed in Wyoming by the Bureau of Plant Industry. This little pumpkin is only 2 to 4 inches long and 5 to 7 inches in diameter. So it has just enough meat in it to make about one pie. The Early Cheyenne pumpkin matures early, and that's good for growers in northern states. And it keeps about as well stored as other varieties. But--- you can't get seed this season for home or market gardens. Perhaps by next spring you will find seeds available. Even so, it will probably be a good idea to try out this one-pie pumpkin on a small acale, to find out whether it is adapted your particular locality.

That concludes our questions and answers for today. More next week.

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